

OGC 75-2850

7 August 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Authority for Compartmentation Systems

1. CIA and other agencies of the intelligence community have used compartmentation systems for a number of years as one tool in protecting particularly important or particularly sensitive information relating to national security. As such, compartmentation systems are mechanisms to protect such information and to control its dissemination and access to it. Typically, a code name or cryptonym will be assigned to designate a project, operation, program, or activity, frequently one which will involve many people and many documents. The life of any such activity may extend over a matter of years and the product or results may be useful or significant for an additional period of time. Subparts of a project or activity may be given additional code names. The systems include instructions and directives specifying standards of protection and limiting dissemination and access. These standards include requirements for special security clearances for personnel involved in the project or receiving its product; they also include the "need-to-know" principle, the essence of which is that information may be made available only to persons who have a need for it. Documents marked with the appropriate codeword are controlled and handled in accordance with such instructions.

2. Authority for such systems is in two sources--the proviso of the National Security Act of 1947 which charges the Director of Central Intelligence with the responsibility for protecting intelligence sources and methods, together with NSCIDirective No. 1 and Executive Order 11652 (and its predecessor, E.O. 10501). The Executive order directs authorized executive branch personnel to determine that disclosure of information for which they are responsible would or would not damage national security. Upon an affirmative determination, such information is to be classified at the appropriate level as specified by the order (Top Secret, Secret, or Confidential). The order also requires certain standards of protection and dissemination. Section 9 of the order specifically authorizes additional protection of classified information including, in particular, classified

information relating to communications intelligence, intelligence sources and methods, and cryptography. Section 9 provides:

"Special Departmental Arrangements. The originating Department or other appropriate authority may impose, in conformity with the provisions of this order, special requirements with respect to access, distribution and protection of classified information and material, including those which presently relate to communications intelligence, intelligence sources and methods and cryptography."

Compartmentation systems therefore are established and maintained in implementation of the proviso to the National Security Act and NSCIDirective No. 1 and within the authority of section 9 of E.O. 11652.



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